



Dear Reader,

When traveling abroad, the first thing to do is to look into cell-phone plans in each country, which is literally of infinite variety. For instance I heard a lot of complaints from my friends that prepaid sims are only available for data, not for talk, in Japan. Minimum prices for sim cards are also very different from place to place: In Thailand, it is something like a few dollars for 10 minutes talk. It is also surprisingly cheap in Spain, only 5 EUR is enough for low-end sims for talk and data (they are just combined in terms of traffic, as far as I remember, and you can add another five whenever you like). It is unexpectedly expensive in China, the minimum price for sims looks like 30 dollars, etc., etc. Globalism is everywhere, but the biggest exception is probably cell-phone plans. Of course, local people do know the best plan fitting his/her use. In Japan, for instance, if you need only data, some 5 dollars are enough per month (up to 1GB, a bit more for 3GB and so on) and you can save an initial cost by purchasing them through the internet.

TCS can make and use a model for almost everything, especially TCS models have been increasingly popular for business-related activities, like investment and auction. However, I am not aware of literatures on this cell-phone plan. It inherently has the nature of online problems since we do not have a clear image of data consumption in the future. This is more important than other online problems like ski rental,



since in the sky-rental case, you obviously know how much you are spending and can control your action; if you do not have your own ski set, you might think it is better to go to a warm island resort rather than a cold ski resort, and this thinking may completely change once you have bought a set of ski gadgets. In the case of contemporary smartphones, it is not easy to guess how much you are spending for data; 4G is comfortably fast and you can easily spend a few MB in a moment. You have also to pay for background communication that is not visible at all. I am looking forward to seeing good models not only for research but also for making my good strategies.

I just had a question about the circulation of our BEATCS. We have both paper volumes and electronic ones. The former is a small number, something like a few hundreds, so the majority is the number of downloads of the latter. This can be seen in the BEATCS web page; here are some stats: Since 2010, for instance, the biggest number of downloads is 2059 times for No. 112 (Feb 2014). Other numbers look like something between 500 and 1200, but unfortunately it has been gradually getting worse (of course this is a sort of accumulation and recent numbers tend to be bad). Nevertheless we have a good news: The most recent issue, No. 123, Oct 2017, enjoyed 679 downloads already. I hope our members would be interested in the data (and in making them better looking).

This issue includes a couple of articles I personally enjoyed to read. One is the Juraj's Education column article by Bell, Tymann and Tymann. I am feeling that the most mysterious thing about the current IT



*technology for ordinary people is that everything comes to their tiny smartphones immediately. Mobile communication technology should be in the curriculum as early as possible, at least its basic ideas. The other one is Yuri's LICS column article by Blass and Yuri himself. The title is quite impressive and I sent him an email asking the same question about automata theory, with which I started my career. His answer was... .. Many thanks to all the authors for another nice issue.*

*Kazuo Iwama, Kyoto  
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